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ABSTRACT

A discussion of language policy in India's educational system identifies substantive issues of both theoretical and comparative interest; presents a detailed account of the issues associated with policy-making for language in education in the Indian socio-political context; and discusses the current status of implementation of these policies, with reference to the latest statistics on language use in higher education. Two of the conclusions are the following: (1) multilingual countries must provide for a supra-regional language in education that serves a variety of sociolinguistic functions; and (2) in India, language policy has followed a pattern of evolution toward languages lower in the prestige hierarchy, which gain more valued roles in the educational system by weakening the exclusive role of the prestige language. While the non-prestige languages have begun to gain status as a medium of instruction first at the elementary and secondary levels, then in early childhood education, and finally in higher education, even for the major languages this process has only begun, and it has not yet begun for many minority languages. (MSE)

LANGUAGE POLICY FOR EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL INDIA: ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION

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INTRODUCTION

The study of language policy in education has been essentially atheoretical so far, consisting mainly of case studies of countries or supra - or sub-national regions or ethnic groups. While it is undeniable that each country or ethnic or linguistic community faces highly specific problems and adopts policies resulting from compromises among particular pressure groups, it is also clear that certain constants and recurrences may be identified, if only at an abstract level.

An obvious example of such a constant is the articulation between the legal (official, constitutional) status of the languages and their status in the curriculum as subject or media at the primary, secondary, or university stage, (eg, English, Hindi, and the regional languages, and the "minority" languages in India). Another constant is the dynamic relationship between educational practice and sociolinguistic reality: for example, a language may have a high status in the educational curriculum but be viewed as of little value outside of the school (e.g., Hindi in South India, the foreign languages in the U.S.,) or vice versa (e.g., Basque, and numerous Pidgins and Creoles).

There are also recurrent themes and principles that can be

easily identified in cross-cultural studies of the subject: the almost universal subscription to the value of the mother-tongue, both on cognitive grounds and emotional; the ancient controversy about the priority of language development versus use in the educational system; the conflict between equity and sociolinguistic pragmatism, which typically arises when speakers of minority (or less powerful) languages have to learn more languages than those of majority (or more powerful) languages, and so on. Many others may be cited. Such cross-cultural similarities support the validity of the attempt to evolve theoretical models of language-for-education policies.

The present paper has three aims. One is to make an indirect contribution to the theoretical enterprise suggested above by identifying certain substantive issues of theoretical and comparative interest in the evolution of language-in-education policies in India. The second aim is to present a detailed account of the issues in language-for-education policy for India in relation to the Indian socio-political context-especially the themes of colonization, modernization, democracy, and language and ethnic identity. Thirdly, this paper discusses the current scene in the implementation of language-in-education policies with reference to the latest statistics on the use of languages as media of higher education.

The Indian experience in the area of formulating and implementing a language policy for education is interesting for a number of reasons. First, India is a traditionally multilingual

society where hundreds of languages belonging to separate language families have coexisted for millennia and this pattern of multilingualism is quite different from the more familiar "transitional" variety. Second, this multilingualism, coupled with the ideals of democracy, puts a serious strain on educational policy and practice, because the needs of each language group have to be met in the curriculum. Third, the neglect of the indigenous languages over a long colonial period clashes with the pressing demand for modernization in a developing country, creating an artificial conflict between the progrssivists and the nationalists. Thus the factors of multilingualism, language development, democracy, and modernization interact to produce a conplex and tumultous scene in the area of language policy for education in India. Many of the issues discussed here apply, mutatis mutandis, to practically all the multilingual excolonial developing countries in Asia and therefore are of comparative significance.

TYPOLOGY OF LANGUAGES FOR EDUCATION

The complexity of the linguistic scene in India is well known and I shall not rehearse it here. It is necessary, however, to keep in mind certain facts about the geographical distribution, official recognition, actual functions, and relative developmental status of the various languages, in so far as they are relevant to educational language planning.

According to the 1961 census, 1,652 mother tongues were reported in India (Pattanayak 1973). This is not a reliable figure because in some cases the "same" language has been

reported under many different names (97 in the case of Hindi) reflecting the respondents' ethnic, professional, attitudinal, regional and other affiliations. Counting only languages reported by more than 1,000 persons and excluding foreign mother tongues, we get approximately 400 languages used in India. These belong to four different language families, namely Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan, and Austro-Asiatic.

Of these, 15 major languages are recognized as "national languages" by the Constitution of India. The following Table includes a list of national languages, the number of speakers of each according to the 1971 census, and the percentage of the total population of India who speak them.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Speakers of these national languages account for about 87% of the total population of India (currently 770 million).

All of the above languages have rich literary traditions, some, like Tamil, going back to the beginnings of the Christian era, while Sanskrit, of course, goes back to about 1500 B.C. They are spoken by large segments of population in well-defined geographical areas (the so-called linguistic states). The exceptions to the geographical statement are Sindhi, Urdu, and Sanskrit. Sanskrit is not spoken any more for ordinary purposes, but it is an important part of pan-Indian cultural heritage. Sindhi and Urdu are ethnic languages whose speakers are distributed throughout India.

In addition, the Constitution recognizes Hindi as the official language, and English as the associate official language the latter to be phased out eventually.

LINGUISTIC MINORITIES:

Table 1 shows that no single mother-tongue emerges as the dominant majority language of the country. Even Hindi-Urdu, the single largest group, is a minority language. Thus, India is a nation of linguistic minorities.

The geographic distribution of languages reveals interesting complexities. First of all, proficient use of Hindi-Urdu is largely confined to the north of India, although it is claimed that some form of pidginized Hindi-Urdu is understood throughout the country, especially in urban areas. Second, while it is true that most of the states in the country have one dominant language spoken in the region, it is equally true that every state and every district is multilingual. Thus, the claim that speakers of the major national languages account for 87% of the population is slightly misleading if it suggests linguistic homogeneity at the state level and heterogeneity only at the national level. The fact is, not all speakers of a given language are concentrated in their linguistic province; sizeable numbers are spread out throughout the nation forming linguistic minorities in their host states. If we take away the speakers of national languages who do not live in their home state, only about 74% of the total population are mother-tongue speakers of the official language

of their home states. Finally, there are a number of languages not listed as national languages in the Constitution. Many of these (around 400) are tribal languages which are not written down (e.g., Gondi, Badaga, etc.). Some others are literary languages whose speakers are either distributed over several states (e.g., Konkani), or do not form the dominant language group in the region (e.g., Tulu in Karnataka), or are foreign languages spoken in border areas (e.g., Nepali) or in erstwhile colonies (e.g., French and Portuguese in Pondicherry and Goa, etc.). These languages are usually referred to by the term "minority languages", although, as we have seen, all languages in India are minority languages. The speakers of these minority languages together with the "migrant" speakers of the national languages constitute a sizeable linguistic minority of 143,667,667 i.e., approximately 26.28% of the total population of India (Chakledar 1981).

Thus the linguistic profile of India consists of the official language of the country, Hindi; the associate official language used by the educated population throughout the country, English; the 15 national languages recognized by the Constitution, most of which are also dominant state languages; and a number of minority languages, tribal and non-tribal, not given official status by the Constitution.

From the point of view of education, we need to recognize the following typology of languages in India: (1) the classical languages; (2) the regional languages; (3) the mother tongues

other than the regional languages; and (4) English.

The classical languages are Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic. Sanskrit was the language of the scriptures, the epics, classical literature and scientific writing in every field from astronomy to surgery. It was thus the lingua franca of the educated elite, the Pan-Indian vehicle of what has been referred to as "the Great Tradition". The Muslim invasions and occupations did not replace Sanskrit but added two more classical languages, Persian and Arabic. Persian also enjoyed royal patronage during the Moghul period as the court language. Schools imparting traditional knowledge in these languages flourished all over India and were patronized by the upper, middle, and priestly classes until this "Oriental" tradition was relegated to a background by the "Anglicists" in the nineteenth century.

The term "regional language" is used to refer to 12 of the 15 "national" languages recognized by the Constitution (i.e., all except Sanskrit, Sindhi, and Urdu). These languages share several important characteristics: they are spoken by large numbers of people; they are spoken in compact geographical areas- in fact, this was the basis of the "reorganization" of states on linguistic lines in 1956, such that each of these languages is the major language of a state (Hindi is the major language of what are now six states); they are also the official languages in their respective states (except Kashmiri in Jammu and Kashmir, where Urdu, the ethnic identity symbol of the predominantly Muslim population is the official language); most important of

all, each of these languages has a long and rich literary tradition, with grammars, writing systems, and recognized standard varieties. The literature in these languages is rich in what is sometimes called "expressive culture" (i.e., creative writing - prose, poetry, drama, etc.) but lacking in "progressive culture" (i.e., the literature of modern empirical science and technology). This fact of being "developed" and "underdeveloped" in different spheres, as we shall see, plays a crucial role in educational planning in modern India.

The third category of languages is what was referred to earlier as minority languages. In each state, there are several types of minorities who speak languages other than the state language. First, there are substantial numbers of migrants from neighboring states; second, there are speakers of unwritten "tribal" languages (these speakers depend on the speakers of the dominant regional language for economic survival, a factor of great significance for education); third, there are speakers of languages which may be neither tribal nor the majority languages, e.g., Konkani, Tulu, etc., which do not have a script of their own, though many have literature written in the major script of the region; finally there are members of religious, ethnic, and other minorities who preserve their language, such as the Urdu-speaking Muslims and Sindhi speaking Sindhis. Educationally, the most serious problems are faced by children of those minority groups whose languages lack either a script or a literary tradition.

Next, English is in a category by itself. It is learnt as a

subject by most students who cross the elementary stage. It is used as a medium of instruction in most subjects at the university level, and is available as an optional medium at the lower levels. There is a flourishing private industry purporting to educate children through the English medium from the earliest stage. English is still used widely in national and state-level administration, in the mass media, and in inter-regional trade, commerce, and other activiites.

Hindi, as the official language of the country, is promoted by the Central government in innumerable ways. Despite initial resistance, and continued partial boycotting, it continues to spread among the non-Hindi states.

Historically, English replaced Sanskrit as the Pan-Indian language of the learned elite. (Sanskrit had already been weakened in this role by the incursions of Persian). In the glosso-politics of the country, therefore, one can identify three types of language conflict or rivalry: (1) English versus the regional languages in the field of education; (2) English versus Hindi for the status of the country's official language or lingua franca; and (3) the regional languages versus the local (minority) languages at the sub-regional level in the fields of education and administration. At each level, rival language groups are interested in preserving current functions for their language or to acquire new functions (Kachru 1981). In order to understand how the current allocation of roles came about, and to gain insights into substantive synchronic issues (such as the

alleged "undeveloped" state of many languages), it is useful to discuss briefly the educational language policy adopted by the British rulers during the colonial era.

LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE COLONIAL ERA:

During the early part of the colonial period, the foreign powers paid little systematic attention to education. Portuguese, Dutch, and French missions established schools in the 16th century while the British missionaries who first arrived in 1614, ran schools for Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and certain Indian employees of the East India Company in its major garrison and factory towns.

When the East India Company became a political and administrative power in 1765, it saw political expediency in downplaying the proselytising role of its missionary schools, and established colleges for Muslims and Hindus in 1784 and 1791 respectively. However, it was not until the Charter Act of 1813 that the Company assumed direct responsibility for educating Indians and allocated resources for

> the revival and improvement of literature and encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction of and promotion of the knowledge of science among the inhabitants of the British territories in India. (Sharp 1920:22)

This act was important for two separate reasons: (1) it directed the company to provide facilities for missionaries "to spread useful knowledge and to effect moral improvement" and (2) it inaugurated a state system of education. Both these actions had a tremendous impact on the role of languages in education.

The missionaries played an important role in the study of

many Indian languages, especially the less-cultivated ones. They started elementary schools where Indian lanuages were used as media, tney wrote the first grammars and textbooks and adapted orthographies for several languages, and edited and translated literary works from others. Their role in promoting English education, however, was far more influential. The schools they established - the "mission schools" and "convents" - where English was the medium of instruction, were highly regarded and were patronized by progressive, affluent, upwardly moble Indians, who saw them as conduits to respectable government employment.

When the British administration assumed responsibility for educating Indians, it was confronted with the controversial choice betweem the existing Oriental system and the English system of education. The General Committee of Public Instruction, formed in 1823, was divided between the Orientalists, who advocated the preservation and promotion of Oriental institutions through Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit, and the Anglicists, who wanted to adopt European style institutions and curriculum (Nurullah and Naik 1964).

The Anglicists were supported by an influential group of Indian social reformers led by Raja Ram Mohun Roy, themselves beneficiaries of English education. They knew that English was the key to advancement in the colonial set up. Moreover, they thought of English as a liberating influence against ignorance and superstition which had kept India in the dark ages. They also genuinely admired the scientific and technological progress of Europe and wished to help Indians partake of it.

The Anglicists' advocacy of English education was based on altogether different motives. They did not disguise their contempt for the native languages and literatures. They espoused an elitist, twotiered approach to education, whose goal was defined as the creation, in the words of Macaulay's famous Minute,

> a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of population (Sharp 1920: Document 30).

It is important to remember that the "vernacular dialects" referred to in the Minute included the literary languages. The decision to ignore the "vernaculars", and to concentrate on English was a turning point in Indian education, and the current controversy regarding the suitability and readiness of Indian languages to serve as media of science and technology can be traced directly to this decision.

Macaulay's Minute was passed by the British Parliament in 1835 and the then Governor General Lord William Bentick declared that,

> the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone (Sharp 1920: Document 30).

Subsequent decisions to replace Persian with English as the court language (1837), to give preference in govenment employment "to those who are educated in English schools" (1844), and the

establishment of the three major universities in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras in 1857 with English as the sole medium of instruction consolidated the supremacy of English. From this period on, education came to be equated with English education and those who studied in the Orienal systems were permanently relegated to a background (McCulley 1940:176).

Macaulay's Minute espoused a selective, elitist approach to education; it ignored the education of the "masses" and rejected the native languages. A more liberal and rational policy was promulgated in the "Despatch" of 1854 by the then Governor General, Sir Charles Wood. This "Wood's Despatch" attempted to allocate complementary roles to English and the vernaculars, declaring that,

> In any general system of education, the English language should be taught where there is a demand for it; but such instruction should always be combined with careful attention to the study of the vernacular languages of the district, and wih such general instruction as can be conveyed through that language. And while the English language continues to be made use of, as by far the most perfect medium for the education of those persons who have acquired a sufficient knowledge of it to receive general instruction through it, the vernacular language must be employed to teach the far larger classes who are ignorant of, or imperfectly acquainted with English....we look, therefore, to the English lnguage and to the vernacular languages of India together as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge, and it is our desire to see them cultivated together in all schools in India of a sufficiently high class to maintain a school master possessing the requisite qualifications...(Bhatt and Aggarwal 1969:8).

Despite the clear role which Wood assigned to the "vernaculars", the emphasis on English continued unabated. The vernaculars were taught only at the elementary level, and could be omitted altogether if the pupil so desired.

The sad state of vernacular language eduction did not go unnoticed by the Sadler Commission (1872) and the Education Commission (1902) appointed by the government to look into the functioning of the universities. The Sadler report noted,

> We are emphatically of opinion that there is something unsound in a system of education which leaves a young man, at the conclusion of his course, unable to speak or write his own mother-tongue fluently and correctly. It is thus beyond controversy that a systematic effort must henceforth be made to promote the serious study of the vernaculars in the secondary schools, intermediate colleges and in the university....(Kanungo 1962:48).

It recommended the use of the vernaculars in the primary and secondary stages, while advocating retention of English as the medium of instruction for all subjects, except the classical and vernacular languages. Although these recommendations resulted in the introduction of the vernacular as compulsory or optional subjects in some universities such as the Universities of Calcutta and Madras, English continued to occupy its privileged place due to several factors: secondary schools were viewed as preparing for the English medium study at the university stage; knowledge of English was valued as a tool of advancement; English was a safe, neutral choice in multilingual and multidialectal regions; and there was a perceived lack of registers, materials, and teachers; and there

Even the appointment of Indian ministers to the Department of Education in 1921 did not bring about significant change in the situation, since both the socioeconomic reality of the value of English education and the inertia of the educational establishment impeded the change of medium at the university

level. Only at the secondary stage, and only in some areas was there a switchover to the regional languages. Thus the language situation in the Indian educational system during the last decades of colonial rule involved three types of arrangement:

(1) English medium in urban centers for the education of the elite, right from the primary stage;

(2) Twotier media: vernacular medium for primary stage and English medium for advanced stage;

(3) Vernacular medium, in rural areas for primary education (Khubchandani 1983).

Thus, the language policy in education during the colonial era creaked two dichotomies, one between the traditional ("Oriental") system of learning and the Western-style of education, with emphasis on empirical science and technology; two, a dichotomy between Englishmedium education and vernacular-medium education, with the balance of power resting squarely with the products of the former system. As with other colonial decisions, it is hard to decide whether the language policy was in the interests of the colonizers or the colonized. To the extent that it opened even a small number of Indians to Western knowledge, it was "progressive", in so far as this was accomplished at the expense of the indegenous languages, it was retrogressive.

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY SINCE INDEPENDENCE

India's independence from British rule in 1947 brought about a number of fundamental changes in language policy. While the

language policies during the colonial period dealt essentially with the role of English visavis the "vernacular" languages, the mandated use of Hindi as the official language brought a new participant into the picture: the constitutional safeguards given to linguistic minorities (though they were only recommendatory and not directive) added yet another element to be reckoned with in formulating a languageineducation policy.

Complicating this task was the federal structure of government adopted in the Constitution, which designated education as a "State" subject. The Central government had the role of coordinating the State policies with a view to evolving a national consensus. To this end, the Central government appointed a series of expert committees and commissions whose recommendations were debated, passionately and often violently, in the public forums. The most important of these commissions and their major recommendations are summarized below (India 1953, 1959; Kothari 1970):

(1) The Conference of the ViceChancellors of Universities (1948), recommended the replacement of English by Indian languages (primarily the major regional languages) as the medium of instruction at the university level within (the unrealistically short period of) five years.

(2) The Conference of the Education Ministers of the States (1948), recommended the adoption of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary and secondary school levels, with the state language when it differed from the mother tongue to be studied as a compulsory subject.

(3) The University Education Commission (1949) recommended that students at the secondary and university levels should know three languages, namely the regional language, the link language Hindi, and English.

(4) The Secondary Education Commission (known as the Mudaliar Commission, after its chairman) (1952), endorsed the recommendation of the education minister's conference and additionally, it recommended the study of at least two other languages, e.g., Hindi and English, at the higher primary level (grades 5 through 8).

(5) The English Review Committee (known after its chairman, as the Kunzru committee, appointed by the University Grants Commission in 1955) emphasized the need to "go slow" on the switch over to regional languages as media of instruction at the university level, and urged the need for the continued study of English by all university students even after the switch in the media.

(6) The Central Advisory Board of Education (1957), suggested what has come to be known as the Three Language Formula, which was adopted by the Conference of State Chief Ministers in 1961. This policy recommended the study of (i) the regional language, (ii) Hindi in nonHindi areas and any other Indian language in the Hindi area, and (iii) English or any other modern European language.

(7) The Education Commission (also known as the Kothari Commission, after its chairman) (19641966), looked into the

problems faced by the states in implementing the Three Language Formula, and recommended a "modified, graduated" Three Language Formula, which won general (though by no means unanimous, see below) acceptance and is the language policy currently in force in most of India.

NUMBER AND CHOICE OF LANGUAGES TO STUDY: THE THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA

The Three Language Formula is a compromise between the demands of the various pressure groups and has been hailed as a masterly --if imperfect-- solution to a complicated problem. It seeks to accomodate the interests of group identity (mother tongues and regional languages), national pride and unity (Hindi), administrative efficiency, and technological progress (English) by mandating compulsory status to some languages and optional choices for the study of others, by prescribing the order of introduction and length of study, as well by making available different choices in different linguistic regions (e.g., the Hindi vs. non-Hindi areas), all within a uniform overall framework. This complicated series of choices as summarized by Nadkarni (1977:101) is given in Table 2 and will be briefly explained directly. According to the Formula, the child is required to study one language at the lower primary stage (grades 14), two languages at the higher primary level (grades 57), three languages at the lower secondary level (grades 810), two languages at the higher secondary level (grades 1112), and no language is obligatory at the university level.

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As for the choice of languages, the formula provides a certain degree of flexibility. At the lower primary level, children whose mother tongue is the official language of the state (the case with about 74% of India's population) study that language. Children who speak languages which are a minority in their region can in most cases study their mother tongue, others study the regional language. (The current policy is to arrange for the teaching of a minority mother tongue if there are at least 10 students in a given grade level requesting it. The higher one goes up the grade levels, the facilities for learning the minority mother tongue become less, especially in the case of speakers of langauges other than the national languages).

At the higher primary level (grades 57), students begin to learn a compulsory second language. In the Hindi areas this is usually English. In the nonHindi areas also, the preferred choice is English, though the formula permits the choice of Hindi at this level. In addition to this second compulsory language, students may optionally add another language at this level- English or Hindi, whichever was not chosen as the compulsory language.

At the lower secondary stage (grades 810) a third compulsory language is introduced. At this stage, students in the nonHindi areas begin learning Hindi and continue their study of English and the mother tongue or regional language. Students in the

Hindi areas are supposed to add a modern Indian language, though they in fact choose a classical language such as Sanskrit, Persian, or Arabic or choose some other option.

At the higher secondary stage (grades 1112), students may continue to study any two of the languages studied so far (i.e., mother tongue and English) or they may learn any two of the following: a modern Indian language (e.g., Marathi), a classical language (e.g., Sanskrit), or a modern foreign language (e.g., French).

PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Though the Three Language Formula is generally regarded as the least unacceptable of all the policies proposed so far, it has been interpreted and implemented differently in different parts of the country. Two states, Tamil Nadu in the South and Mizoram in the East, have refused to accept it, and follow a Two Language Policy (Mother tongue/regional language and English) instead. In some nonHindi states, (for example West Bengal and Orissa) the classical language Sanskrit is taught in place of Hindi as the third language. In certain other nonHindi states, students are required to take courses in Hindi but need not pass them or the passing mark is fixed at a very low level. Many Hindi states are less than enthusiastic about teaching a (non-Hindi related) modern Indian language as the third language, as the Education Commission had suggested in the hope of promoting national integration (Report of the Education Commission 1964-66:59). Instead, they tend to teach Sanskrit (which, being the "parent" of modern IndoAryan languages of North India is

presumably easier to learn) or Persian or Arabic or another Indo-Aryan language of the North, e.g., Marathi or Bengali. This creates resentment especially in the Southern states, where the genetically unrelated Dravidian languages are spoken. They feel that the formula "imposes" the "North Indian" language on them, while the North Indians are not made to learn a South Indian language. The fact that the language policies implemented in the Hindi areas is a reflection of the sociolinguistic status of Hindi visavis the South Indian languages is, of course, of no consolation to the critics of these policies. However, despite an occasional flurry of protests in the form of letters to editors and sporadic political speeches, the Three Language Formula seems to have come to stay in India. The Central Government has (wisely) kept out of the controversy, appearing to promote all languages, continuing its munificient patronage of Hindi and slowly and surely introducing Hindi, without dislodging English into more and more domains in the administration. Thus, the real growth of Hindi in its role as an official language of the country has had the effect of softening up the opposition. If anything, more and more people see an advantage in knowing Hindi.

A major problem with the Three Language Formula lies in its belonging to the linguistic minorities (whether because of migration, tribal affiliation, or small numbers in their state of residence) are faced with the cruel choice of either learning four languages or foregoing their mother tongue: they need

the regional language for all practical, administrative, and academic purposes at the higher grade levels. In many urban centers, there are schools, government and private, which impart education through Grade 10 in certain minority languages. In such schools, students can theoretically study only three languages (mother tongue, Hindi, and English, for example). However, such facilities are available only in large cities and towns, and only for the children of migrants who speak the major national languages. Even in those schools, there is increasing pressure to make the teaching of the regional language compulsory. Thus we come back to the four language plan. As for the minorities who do not speak one of the national languages (about 13% of the population), they are forced to learn the regional language in addition to their mother tongue around the grade level of 5 or so, since higher education is in most cases available only through the major language of the region.

Thus we see that the Three Language Formula seeks to solve the problem of the number of languages to be studied in a multilingual country by accomodating the regional language, the language of higher education, and the official language, at the expense of the classical language and the minority mother tongue. Of course, students can and do study these other languages as optional languages, but this adds more languages to a curriculum already heavily skewed in favor of languages as opposed to other subjects.

Another aspect of this solution is worth noting. While the Formula makes it possible for a citizen to acquire the languages

needed to perform most of the highly valued functions, it does pose an extra burden on the 26% of the population who speak the "minority" languages. Thus, even in a democracy, multilingualism has not been accomodated without some cost to the linguistic minorities.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

The second major language issue in Indian education is the choice of the medium of instruction at various levels and in different fields. It is here that the debate about language development becomes acute.

There are two chief questions relating to the medium of teaching: (1) what should be the medium of minority language speakers at the early stage?, and (2) how long should English continue to be the medium at the university stage?

The government of India, as well as all the state governments subscribe to the principle of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at least in the initial stages, ideally throughout the educational career. In the case of speakers of the major national languages of the country (covering approximately 87% of the population), there has been no serious problem in implementing this policy, except in small towns and rural areas where teachers may not be available for small numbers of children of migrants. The real problem is the choice of medium of instruction for the minorities who speak one of the unrecognized (tribal or other) languages. Many of these languages are (i) not cultivated, (ii) do not enjoy official

recognition for administrative purposes. Therefore, the main reason for using them as subjects and/or media is to affirm the student's linguistic identity and to aid the learning of basic skills such as literacy, and arithmetic. Beyond this stage, it is felt that many of these languages are of little practical value to the child, if only because there is little written material available in these languages. The policy, therefore, has been to provide two types of schools: (i) where the "principal" medium is the official language of the state (the majority of schools are of this type) and (ii) where a minority language is used as the medium of instruction whenever there are at least 10 stuents in a given class who request it. In the case of the so-called "uncultivated" or tribal languages, they are used as media usually only up to the end of the primary grades (hence referred to as "subordinate" media) at which point the state languages take their place as the chief medium . This has been referred to as "mainstreaming". When the minority language is one of the recognized national languages (e.g., Kannada in Andhra Pradesh), it is allowed to be used throughout the school years.

As of 1976, 15 languages were used as media throughout the school years in India. These include all the national languages except Kashmiri, plus English and Manipuri - the last being the official language of the union territory of Manipur. 46 other languages were being used as subordinate media (i.e., for a limited number of years). These were mainly languages belonging to the Sino-Tibetan and Austric families, which have not been "cultivated" and lack a literary tradition (Chaturvedi and Mohale

1976:41-42).

It is obvious that compared to the number of mother tongues, the number of languages taught as subjects or media is small. However, if we take note of the fact that a given language may be reported under several names, the 61 languages used in schools represent several hundred mother tongues.

Replacing English as the medium of instruction at the university level has proved to be more problematic. Many of the reasons for this situation are common to many multilingual former colonial nations: the value of English as a "neutral" language among rival native languages; the nation-wide and international acceptability of English compared to the territorial restriction imposed by the regional languages; the lack of vocabulary and registers in the regional languages in the areas of science, engineering, medicine, etc.; the fear of provincialization and retrogression in an age of rapid mobility and technological innovations; above all, the delay in giving official recongnition to the regional languages in such domains as administration, and law, and the consequent perception of the limited value of regional language education.

EFFORTS FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The educational planning agencies - the Central and State govenments, the University Grants Commission, the universities and training colleges have taken a number of steps to answer the critics of regional language media and to facilitate the proces of switch-over. They point out that a language "develops" only

when put to new uses; nevertheless, attempts are made to hasten the process by creating technical terms for use in textbooks and class rooms. Generous subsidies are given to state education departments to commission textbooks in various subjects in regional languages. The state governments and universities, in turn, have opened either universities where the exclusive medium is the regional language, or sections of courses taught in the regional languages.

These efforts have also been criticized on various grounds. The central government sought to remedy the fear of provincialization by offering a grant of about one million dollars each to states using textbooks written using the "standard" (Pan-Indian) terminology suggested by its Directorate of Terminology. The new technical terms have been criticized as strange and unnatural, having been coined by purists from Sanskrit roots and often involving unpronounceable clusters - in short, the new terms were as opaque as the English ones they are meant to replace, without the latter's advantage of international currency. The style in which the new textbooks are written has also been criticized as stilted because of direct translation of English syntactic patterns.

In this context, the suggestion made by Krishnamurti (1979) seems to be eminently practical. He recommends that the teachers of science subjects should take a pragmatic approach to the problem of terminology. Without worrying too much about language purity, they should employ whatever technical terms come naturally to them in the course of teaching in the regional

languages - in other words, resort to extensive code-switching and code-mixing. Over years of use, a terminology adapted to the situational context will naturally evolve from practice.

Quite apart from the problem of terminology there are problems with the production and distribution of regional langauge textbooks (Naik 1980). Gupta (1980:97-99) cites several cases of inefficiency all around to illustrate the poor show of regional language textbooks at the university level. The Telugu Academy of Andhra Pradesh translated Advanced Accounts by Shukla and Grewal into Telugu and marketed this book in two volumes at the subsidized price of Rs.78, as compared to Rs.35 of the original English language edition. The result was that only 929 copies of Volume I and 639 copies of Volume II were sold between 1973/74 to 1976/77, whereas about 30,000 copies of the English edition are sold every year. This is equally true of other regional language textbooks. Several books published between 1970-1977 in Bengali for students in West Bengal received a similar fate (Gupta 1980:98). Notice the poor sale of Bengali language textbooks given in Table 3 below.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Despite the problems noted above, universities seem to be making a steady, if slow, progress toward Indianizing the medium of instruction. The latest (1981) statistics on the medium of instruction in Indian universities in various subject areas and at the graduate and undergraduate levels are given in Table 4 below. It is clear from this Table that English is still (the

figures are for 1981) pervasive in the university system. Even so the regional languages have entered the picture as optional, alternative media -- though they are clearly not as popular among students, especially in the science and the professional courses, and especially at the graduate level. There are very few universities which offer instruction exclusively through the regional language, and all of these are in the Hindi area. The hegemony of English is even more pronounced at specialized institutions such as the agricultural universities, the prestigeous Indian Institutes of Technology and a number of institutions of higher learning such as the Indian Management Institute and the so-called "deemed universities".

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Although it is encouraging to note that so many universities offer the regional languages as additional or alternative media, the reality is less rosy than the statistics. For, the two alternatives are not valued equally. Often the regional language media classes have very few students. Unfortunately, the enrollment figures for the regional language sections vis-a-vis English are not available. Observations show that the former are not popular. Students have to be coaxed to enter the regional language - medium courses. Or, lack of proficiency in English is used as a device to fill the regional language medium classes. Although empirical evidence is not available on this point, in general, there is a perception that these courses are chosen by the less academically ambitious students.

The main reason for the less than enthusiastic response from students and parents to the regional language medium is attitudinal. English is (correctly) perceived as potentially more useful - a larger number of more highly valued roles are made possible by the study of English (see Sridhar 1982). One such role is nation-wide mobility, which even Hindi does not provide. Another is entry into elite institutions of higher learning, such as the Indian Management Institute and the Indian Institutes of Technology. A third is perceived (and probably real) advantage in all-India competetive examinations for prestigeous civil service executive positions, such as the Indian Administrative Service. Yet another is the opportunity to go abroad for higher study. Finally, there is the greater relative prestige in society which manifests itself in many ways, e.g., higher paying jobs, a more expeditious response from government and business employees, etc.

The second major reason, which complements the higher evaluation of English, is the (still) widespread belief that the regional languages are simply not yet ready to function as media for technical subjects, despite the assurance of the experts. While the value of mother tongue medium is readily conceded, those who can afford to (including the most militant protagonists of the regional languages) send their children to English medium (private) schools and colleges.

The official policy of encouraging the regional languages, often at the expense of English, has had at least two potentially serious consequences: (i) it has resulted in the flight of the

urban middle classes from the public (government) schools to privately managed English medium schools. The latter have been mushrooming at an alarming rate - alarming because their only qualifications often are the English medium, and the trappings of the 'missionary' schools such as school uniforms: the quality of instruction is not necessarily better. Their attraction is so great that even a lower middle class family thinks nothing of spending a precious part of its income on the high fees charged by such schools rather than patronize the free government school. (ii) Just as the critics had feared, professional mobility is being curtailed. The principle of hiring the best candidate regardless of which part of the country he/she comes from has had to be compromised because of the requirement that the candidate be able to use the regional language in the work place. Some critics feel that this reduces competition and leads to provincialism.

In a sense, the dilemma of the medium is not unlike the other dilemmas in which the Indian educational institutions find themselves caught. Consider for example the policy of affirmative action toward the traditionally depressed castes. The prevalent mode of implementing this policy, both in education and public employment, has been through a quota system: a certain proportion of "seats" and positions are reserved at each level for candidates from the 'scheduled' castes and tribes and other minorities. But this policy has been subjected to the same criticisms as the language policy. There seems to be no painless

solution. The hope is that this is only a short term problem of transition from feudalism/colonialism to democracy.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, I would like to make the following tentative generalizations concerning the evolution of language policies in education in a multilingual country. To what extent these remarks apply to other countries is an empirical question, whose examination will direct our efforts to evolve theoretical paradigms.

(1) Education in multilingual countries has to provide for a supra-regional language that performs not only the "L" functions of a lingua franca but also the "H" functions in the sense of Ferguson 1959. In fact, the part of the educational policy which concerns the "H" functions will be more successfully implemented than that part which deals with the "L" functions. In India, the widespread variation in the implementation of the provision for Hindi in the Three Language Formula is a case in point, since Hindi still performs relatively few "H" functions compared to English.

(2) In a multilingual democracy, language policies in education evolve in the direction of languages lower on the prestige hierarchy annexing more and more valued roles in the educational system by weakening the exclusive rights of the prestige languages. This point is supported at two stages in the evolution of language policies in India - first, the struggle of the 15 major "national" languages for recognition in the educational system, and now, a similar struggle, being waged by

the "minority" languages, for status first as a subject language at the elementary level, then throughout the school system, subsequently as the medium of instruction at the early stages and finally at the university level, in all subjects. This battle is far from complete in India, even for the major languages, and has not yet begun for scores of minority languages.

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TABLE I

PERCENTAGE OF SPEAKERS OF THE 15 NATIONAL LANGUAGES OF INDIA *

Language	% Total Population
Assamese	1.63
Bengali	8.17
Gujarati	4.72
Hindi	29.67
Kannada	3.96
Kashmiri	.44
Malyalam	4.00
Marathi	7.71
Oriya	3.62
Punjabi	3.00
Sanskrit	N
Sindhi	.31
Tamil	6.88
Telugu	8.17
Urdu	5.22
Others	12.50

*Based on the 1971 Census (Pattanayak 1973:77)

TABLE II

MODIFIED AND GRADUATED 3-LANGUAGE FORMULA

Educational level			Languages as subjects of study
Lower Primary (Classes I-IV)			Mother-tongue (Regional language)
Higher Primary (Classes V-VII)		(1)	Mother-tongue (Regional language) Hindi or English
Lower Secondary (Classes VIII-X)		(1)	Mother-tongue (Regional language)
		(2)	Hindi in non-Hindi areas and a modern Indian language in Hindi areas
		(3)	English
Higher Secondary (Classes XI-XII)			Any two from Group A or from Group B
	(A)	(1)	Mother-tongue (Regional language)
		(2)	Hindi in non-Hindi areas and a modern Indian language in Hindi areas
		(3)	English
	(B)	(1)	A modern Indian language
		(2)	A modern foreign language
		(3)	A classical language-Indian or foreign
University			No language compulsory

Nadkarni 1977:101)

TABLE III

TITLES PUBLISHED AND TITLES SOLD

Titles Published	Total # of copies	Total cost of production	Copies sold as of May '77
Sabdabigyan	1,100	Rs. 9,850	2
Jamitio Alokbigyan	1,118	22,100	54
Amphibia Reptilia	1,105	18,500	33
Samajbigyan	1,100	30,500	15
Mahajagotic Rashmi	1,100	13,000	nil

(Gupta 1980:9)

TABLE IV

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT GRADUATE & POSTGRADUATE LEVELS FOR DIFFERENT COURSES AT INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

		Regional Language	English	Regional Lg. and English	
Arts (Humanities & Social Sc)	Ugr.	12	16	50	9
	Gr.	6	43	33	5
Science	Ugr.	10	23	43	13
	Gr.	3	58	21	7
Commerce	Ugr.	11	15	48	15
	Gr.	5	37	26	19
Law	Ugr.	4	41	26	3
	Gr.	0	30	12	3
Engineering	Ugr.	1	48	3	37
	Gr.	0	37	3	49
Medicine	Ugr.	0	53	5	2
	Gr.	0	48	4	3

Based on Universities Handbook 1981-1982: 1245-1249.